THE BEST ASPECT FOR ROOMS.

THE inquiry opened up by "G. C." (page 737) is one, indeed, of great consequence, and well worthy of being discussed. Whatever ideas, or results of experience, can be brought together upon the subject, must be of value, seeing that, next to its *location*, the *position* of a house is of prime importance. I know of no writer who has given such consideration to it as the late Mr. Loudon; the merits of whose diagonal system, set forth in the annexed extracts from his "Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture," are deserving of being carefully weighed.

With regard to the aspect which is most common in towns, it certainly does seem to be the practice, in laying out a new town, to aim at laying the lines of main streets due east and west; and supposing it to be the case that in these the business houses are congregated, and that private residences are situated chiefly in the cross streets, then the observation of "G. C." —that the aspect of the majority of dwelling-houses is east and west—will hold good: according to my observation, however, this is not the case; but I could readily adduce examples of towns wherein the cross streets contain only the flanks of the houses, garden-walls, and mews lanes, the principal fronts being confined almost entirely to the lines of street running east and west.

Whether it is a sound practice to lay out main streets in these directions, giving all the sun during the best of the day to one side, subjecting that to its full blaze, while the other is all in shade, and rendering the walk westward in the evening, when the sun is near the horizon, so unpleasant, so far as the eyes are concerned, appears open to be questioned: were the lines laid north-east and south-west, the sunning of the two sides would be rendered more equal, and the homeward course more pleasant,—the sun, if crossing, being higher in the firmament, or, if low, having already crossed.

In saying "the homeward course," I must explain that I refer to the growth of towns, being chiefly westward, a circumstance which I cannot say I have ever seen noticed, but have observed to be generally the case, with a southerly tendency. It is natural to seek the sunshine, and hence the sites for their villas and cottages are by business men sought, by choice, westward—still westward; while, in order, if possible, to prevent some neighbour squatting down between them and the sun, they keep edging also, of necessity, towards the south; not even deterred by boisterous sou'-westers: and thus the growth of towns is influenced. In this south-west position, those same prevailing breezes, which might be considered as a drawback to its selection, exempt it from the currents of smoke that often form a canopy over the opposite quarter.

If a town were laid out diagonally to the four cardinal points of the compass, as Mr. London would have done had he had the opportunity, the expressions denoting the intermediate points would doubtless become equally familiar with those denoting these points, and as simple and easy to direct by. If I am right in my hypothesis about the growth of towns, the growth of such a town would be more regular than of those whose streets are square with the cardinal points. In the country, in the case of the road lying square with these points, there is seldom any obstacle to villas or cottages being set diagonally to it, as Mr. London suggests; but where that is not practicable or expedient, much of the advantage may be gained by means of splayed oriel windows; which might even, for the same reason, be employed in towns. As a general rule, where the front of a house towards such a road has a northerly aspect, the principal rooms should be turned to the opposite side; the offices being formed in wings to right and left.

As an evidence of the importance of the sunshine to our dwellings, in a sanitary point of view, and the propriety of so arranging streets as to equalise it, it has been observed that epidemics will extend along the shady side of a street, while the other enjoys a perfect immunity. This I had myself occasion to notice in the time of cholera a few winters back, in a locality where only the wealthier class of inhabitants resided. Physiologists have also pointed to the deformed growth of the children of the extreme poor, when reared in the cellars of narrow alleys in densely-built localities, where the sun's rays are prevented penetrating.

"G. C." notices the dismal character of north rooms. I have known this enhanced to perfection by means of puce-coloured papering: nothing could be better calculated to conquer the contumacy of a criminal. Mediums are usually best; and apartments that have too much sun—as in the west,—and those that have too little—as in the north, may be greatly ameliorated by means of the tints employed in them. It must not be forgotten, the while, in regard to warehouses for soft goods, that a northern aspect is preferred; which will, in a measure, explain that mysterious lining of the lower sashes with light-blue paper (nearest the line of countering), which is a remarkable feature in manufacturing towns, and in some parts of the city of London,—the object of which, I believe, is to neutralise the excess of yellow in the sun's light, which causes "blues" and some other colours to look to disadvantage: this is necessary to be had recourse to in those warehouses which have a southern or western exposure.

I hope other correspondents will contribute their views on this subject, which "G. C." has so well introduced. JAMES WYLSON.

EXTRACTS ON ASPECT, FROM LOUDON.

"With reference to Britain, and to the flat countries of most parts of Europe, the mildest aspect is the south-east; and, therefore, the door of a cottage should, if possible, be placed on that side. The next best is the south; and the two worst are the north-east and south-west. It is very desirable, in a cold moist climate, that the sun should shine on all the exterior walls of the cottage, and also in at all the windows, every fine day in the year; for the sake of keeping the walls dry, and the interior warm and cheerful. This object may be accomplished by placing any building which is, or can be, resolved into a square, or parallelogram, on the ground plan; so as that a north-and-south line will form the diagonal (of the) figure. This being done, the out-offices should be placed on the north-west side of the square, or parallelogram. The dairy and the pantry should always, if possible, be placed on the same side, or with a north-east aspect, for the sake of coolness. Tanks for water should also be on the same side, and under ground, for the same reason.

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In all practicable cases, we intend that the dwelling should be so placed as to admit of the sun shining on all its walls every fine day in the year, with the exception of a few weeks at the winter solstice. * * In most parts of Europe the door should face the south-east. When cottages are detached, and built either singly or in pairs, and set down in a garden, the adherence to this rule of position, with respect to the sun, will add to the picturesque beauty of a village, whatever may be the direction of the road along the sides of which the houses and gardens are built and laid out. * * * In building long lines of connected dwellings of this sort, this law cannot be applied; but if the lines (which determine the aspect) be in the direction of south and north, the same advantages, in point of heat and dryness, are obtained as by the diagonal position of detached cottages; for the sun will shine throughout the year on the east and west sides of every dwelling; and the south and north sides being party walls will be necessarily both dry and warm.

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There are some considerations respecting aspect which apply to every country; and others to particular countries or districts of country only. Nothing in the architecture or appendages of a house can compensate for its being set down on the north side of a high hill or ridge; where it is precluded from partaking of the direct influence of the sun during three or four months in the year. In most countries there is some point of the compass from which rain and storms are more frequent than any other; and to set down a house in such a manner as to be exposed to these tempests is evidently injudicious. An aspect exposed to high wind is less objectionable than one exposed to driving rains; since shelter may be afforded from the former by trees, but not from the latter by any means.

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The preference should always be given to the south-east when practicable; as the wind, in most parts of Great Britain, blows seldomer from that quarter than from any other; and when it does blow it is always warm. The south-west is a boisterous quarter, and should only be had recourse to when it is necessary, in order to obtain a diagonal to the plan which shall be a south-and-north line. * * * We prefer, in almost every case of single cottages, to have, next the road, an angle of the building; by which the views across the road will be oblique instead of being direct; as the former, in every case, exhibits a longer perspective, which must consequently contain a greater number of objects. The grand point to be attended to, in putting down every cottage, single or double, ought to be to have the diagonal to the main building a south-and-north line: this rule ought to be considered as absolute."

FOREIGN ARCHITECTURAL AND ARTISTICAL INTELLIGENCE.

Statuary Art in Russia.—The monument of the Emperor Paul I. has been lately completed and inaugurated at *Gatschina*, near St. Petersburg, the place to which the unfortunate monarch was most partial. The bronze statue represents the emperor in a standing position, costumed according to his fashion, as in the act of commanding, &c.——At *Saratow* (on the confines of Asia), also, the German colonists have erected a bronze monument to the memory of Catherine II.

Railway from St. Petersburg to Warsaw.—The tracing of this huge line of communication has been completed, and the earthworks are now in progress. General Gerstfeld, the assistant of General Kleinmichel, director of public works and roads, is intrusted with this undertaking. This line will not keep a straight direction, and extends to the double length of that from Moscow to the Russian capital. It is calculated that it will be completed in about ten years.

Curves.—*M. de Radowitz*, the well-known Prussian statesman, and formerly prime minister, delivered a lecture in one of the Aulas of Berlin, "On the use of the Curve in Architecture." Starting from the forms, dates, and measurements of Grecian buildings, he alluded to the circumstance that if the pediment, the elevation, or the corner columns, be taken into account, curves and not straight lines will be observed. M. de R. expatiated on the æsthetic feeling of man, which prefers waiving to straight lines, &c. The lecture was held at a meeting of the Erfurt Society of Art-friends.

Italy.—At Bologna, a plan has been started to erect a *Pantheon*, for commemorating all the great men born in that city. The execution of the statues and busts is to be entrusted to M. Bollsami, professor of sculpture at the Bologna Academy of Fine Arts, in whose *atélier* two statues Psyche and Eve, in white marble, are now much admired. At Florence, the exhibition of the Academy has been enriched by a bronze group of Cain and Abel, made by the professor of sculpture. The mediæval buildings of Siena, Pisa, and Lucca, are being actively restored, and the domes (cathedrals) of Prato and Orvieto have undergone a thorough repair, when, conjointly, many injudicious restorations of the time of art-decadency were also removed.

THE IRON TRADE.—In Scottish pig-iron, it is reported, a large business has been done, mostly on speculation, on Glasgow account, and prices slightly advanced on previous rates. Staffordshire iron has been as heretofore, dull of sale, and Welsh bar iron without demand.

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